

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-20 AID-05 EB-08
NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-01 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06
LAB-04 SIL-01 L-03 H-02 DODE-00 PA-02 PM-05 IO-14
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R 070230Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 644

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 3004

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEAN, PEPR, SN, US

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE PRESS QUOTES PRIME MINISTER'S

INTERVIEW: U.S. INTENDS TO STAY IN ASIA

1. STRAITS TIMES JULY FIFTH CARRIES FRONT PAGE STORY FROM LONDON CORRESPONDENT PHILIP LEE ON INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW IN JULY ISSUE OF LONDON-BASED MONTHLY "EURO-MONEY." BULK OF STORY IS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF SINGAPORE-HONG KONG COMPETITION AS ASIAN FINANCIAL CENTERS, WITH LEE QUOTED AS ASSERTING THAT THE ULTIMATE TEST IS SINGAPORE'S RELEVANCE TO THE WORLD ECONOMY, AND ITS DEVELOPMENT OF BANKING EXPERTISE.

2. ON ASEAN, LEE IS CITED AS STATING THAT DESPITE IMMENSE OBSTACLES, DIVERSE ECONOMIES, AND DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL AIMS, ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE
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COME TOGETHER IN RECOGNITION OF COMMON DANGERS FACED AND "AWESOME ALTERNATIVES IF WE DO NOT WORK TOGETHER."

3. CONCERNING FUTURE PROBLEMS OF SINGAPORE, LEE IS REPORTED AS NOTHING PROBLEMS OF MANPOWER FLEXIBILITY AS "GENERATION THAT HAS NOT KNOWN POVERTY" COMES ONTO JOB MARKET INTERESTED ONLY IN HIGH STATUS POSITION

WITH GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS.

4. STORY CONCLUDES WITH DISCUSSION OF U.S. ROLE IN ASIA, UNDER BACK PAGE HEADLINE "U.S. INTENDS TO STAY IN ASIA: LEE." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM "EURO-MONEY" INTERVIEWER PADRAIC FALLON WHETHER PM THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE U.S. PULLOUT FROM ASIA, LEE IS QUOTED AS FOLLOWS: "SAID MR. LEE: 'THE POSITION TODAY IS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE POSITION WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER FIRST ANNOUNCED THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL GROUND FORCES IN KOREA BY 1981.

"FIRST, IT IS APPARENT TO EVERYBODY THAT IT IS NOT THE DRAMATIC OFF-THE-MAINLAND POSTURE THAT PEOPLE FEARED IT MIGHT BE.

"I AM CONVINCED BY WHAT THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PRINCIPAL AIDES HAVE SAID, AND BY THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM AND CONGRESS, THAT THIS IS NO PULLOUT OF ASIA.

"THE UNITED STATES UNDERSTANDS THAT IF THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN THEIR POSITION WHICH IMPE-RILS OR JEOPARDISES JAPANESE SECURITY, THEN THERE WILL BE A SHIFT IN JAPAN'S OWN POSITION, AND THAT COULD ALTER THE BALANCE OF POWER OF THE WHOLE WORLD.'

"MR. LEE SAID THIS WOULD BE DISASTROUS AND BELIEVED THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD MAINTAIN A CAPACITY TO PROJECT UNCLASSIFIED

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THEIR NAVAL TASK FORCE INTO THE REGION, INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN, INTO THE SOUTH PACIFIC.

"AND THEY INTEND TO STAY IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR THIS PURPOSE."

5. COMMENT: THE PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON THE U.S POSITION IN ASIA ARE GRATIFYING REFLECTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AND OTHER ASSURANCES ON THE CONTINUING U.S. INTEREST IN ASIA.
INGRAHAM

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